

ADVISORY CIRCULAR

AC No: AC 61-101

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Change:

Initiated

by: AVN-130

Subject: PRESOLO WRITTEN TEST

1. PURPOSE. To provide guidance to flight instructors in developing a written test to administer to student pilots prior to solo flight.
2. REFERENCES. Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Part 61 and Advisory Circular AC 60-14, Aviation Instructor's Handbook.
3. BACKGROUND. A revision of FAR Section 61.87(b) becomes effective August 31, 1989. This revision requires the satisfactory completion of a written test by student pilots prior to solo flight. The flight instructor who endorses the student pilot certificate for solo flight is required to administer and grade the written test prior to certificate endorsement.
4. DISCUSSION. FAR Section 61.87(b) states that the presolo written test must include questions applicable to FAR Parts 61 and 91 and on the flight characteristics and operational limitations of the make and model aircraft to be flown. The regulation allows the flight instructor the flexibility to develop a presolo written test which not only evaluates the student's knowledge on general operating rules, but on the specific environment in which the student will be operating on the particular make and model of aircraft to be flown.

Prior to developing a presolo written test a flight instructor should review chapter VII of AC 61-14 which discusses the development of written test questions.

The content and number of test questions are to be determined by the flight instructor. An adequate sampling of the general operating rules should be included. In addition, a sufficient number of specific questions should be asked to ensure the student has the knowledge to safely operate the aircraft in the local environment.

The regulation requires a presolo written test for each make and model of aircraft to be soloed. Because of the varying complexity of aircraft and operating environments, the flight instructor will have to use good judgment in developing the test. For instance, a student who would be operating from a controlled airport located near a terminal control area or airport radar service area should have adequate knowledge to operate safely in the environment prior to solo. Likewise, a student operating from a high elevation airport might need emphasis placed on the effects of density altitude. Specific questions should be asked to fit the situation.

In areas where specific knowledge is to be tested, it is suggested that supply-type test questions be used. This type of

question requires the student to supply an answer and permits them to tell all they know about a subject even though they do not know the complete answer. The supply-type question, as opposed to the selection-type question, will allow the flight instructor to better evaluate the student's knowledge and understanding.

In preparation for the development of the written test, the flight instructor should review FAR Parts 61 and 91, consider the aircraft characteristics and operational performance and limitations, and evaluate the operational environment to which the student will be exposed. Once the flight instructor has made a determination of the knowledge needed to operate the aircraft safely for solo flight, a test should be constructed which will measure this knowledge.

Since a written test is required prior to solo flight, the flight instructors should keep a record of the written test results for at least 3 years. This record should include at least the date, name of the student, and the results of the test.

/s/ John M. Howard
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